

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
NATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT CENTER
DENVER FEDERAL CENTER, BUILDING 50
P.O. BOX 25047
DENVER, COLORADO 80225-0047**

In Reply Refer To:
1221-560(HR-210) **P**

December 21, 2001

EMS TRANSMISSION 12-26-2001
Instruction Memorandum No. HR-2002-006
Expires: 09/30/2003

To: All Servicing Personnel Officers

From: Director, National Human Resources Management Center

Subject: Guidance for Implementing New Classification Standards

Program: Human Resources Management

Purpose: This Instruction Memorandum (IM) identifies Bureau policy when implementing OPM Classification Standards.

Policy Action: Personnel offices are required to implement new classification standards to existing positions as outlined in this IM.

Time Frames: New Standards are effective the day in which they are posted on OPM's website. Full implementation and completion dates are specified for different series listed below.

Standard	Description	Implementation by
GS-200A	HR Administrative	01/31/02
GS-200C	HR Assistance	01/31/02
GS-500PA	Accounting and Budget Professional and Administrative	3/31/02
GS-0900	Legal and Kindred Assistance	9/30/02
GS-901A	New, Flysheet	9/30/02
GS-2200	IT Administrative	6/30/02

Budget Impact: In most cases the implementation of the new standard will not impact budget.

Background: OPM in August 2001 and DOI in October 2001 issued guidance on Implementing new classification standards. This IM further specifies BLM implementing instructions. It furnishes implementation deadlines and supplemental guidance. The guidelines are designed to ensure that the implementation requirements are met with the minimal administrative work. However, it does not prohibit the use of evaluation statements, preparation of new PDs, or any other documentation as determined locally.

The minimum requirement is the preparation of a Position Classification Amendment form (DI 625). When situations require only a change to title and/or series, use the DI 625 to amend the old position description outlining the necessary changes. Following this type of amendment, make pen and ink changes to the OF-8. Grade changes or situations where the work has significantly changed will require a redescription.

As is the case with the GS-200 series, the Position Classification Standard format changes from narrative to FES. In these cases the minimum requirement would be a DI 625 and a skeleton FES evaluation with factor levels and point totals awarded.

Attached, as appendices, is additional information and guidance to be considered when implementing the new standards.

Manual/Handbook Sections Affected: None

Coordination: As described under background.

If you have any questions regarding the implementation of the New Standards please contact Todd Ryan (303) 236-6669 or Julia Rael (303) 236-6705.

Signed by:
Linda Sedbrook
Director, National Human Resources Center
5 Attachments

Authenticated by:
Luron Porter
Staff Assistant

Supplemental Information and Guidance

- 1 - GS-2210 Administrative - Series Placement of GIS Positions (3pp)
- 2 - GS-2210 Administrative - Assistance (GS-335) Versus Specialist (GS-2210) in Customer Support Work (1p)
- 3 - GS-2210 Administrative - Telecommunication Positions (1p)
- 4 - OPM Classification Appeal Decision C-0335-09-02 (6pp)
- 5 - Position Classification Amendment DI625 Sample (1p)

Supplemental Information and Guidance Implementing the GS-2210 Information Technology Series

Series Placement of GIS Positions

In most cases, the occupational series will represent the primary work of the position, the highest level of work performed, and the paramount qualifications required. However, with the release of the Job Family Standard (JFS) covering the GS-2210 series, many positions that were placed in the GS-0301 series because of a perceived lack of a more appropriate series may now be properly covered by the GS-2210 series. We must now decide which positions are to be converted. In some cases, the decision may be "gray" at best. To select the appropriate series, determine the paramount knowledge, that is the most important subject-matter knowledge, required to perform the primary duties of the position. To determine the paramount knowledge, consider the primary purpose for the position's existence, the most important qualification(s) required, recruitment sources, career progression, and the background knowledge required. Management and HR specialists must take care to apply the "paramount knowledge requirement test" as consistently and fairly as possible. These concepts must be applied when making conversion decisions, not just for GS-0301 positions, but for all categories of positions that contain IT-related duties and responsibilities.

Automation may increase productivity, but typically the basic work processes performed by employees remain substantially unchanged. The paramount subject matter knowledge, skills, and abilities also do not change. The kinds of automation involved and the skills required to use them generally replace or supplement work methods and techniques previously performed through manual or machine enhanced processes or in centralized data processing centers. Most commonly, neither the purpose of the work nor the products expected of the employee change due to automation.

For positions that fall into the gray area between clearly subject matter and clearly data processing, use sound classification judgment to identify the purpose of the work. Evaluate the primary qualifications required, career paths in the organization, intent of management in defining the position, and possible sources of applicants to fill the positions. The purpose of the work most often identifies the appropriate subject matter series and grade level criteria to be used.

Paramount knowledge required: Most positions have a paramount knowledge requirement even though several different kinds of work may be assigned to the position. The paramount knowledge is the most important type of subject-matter knowledge or experience required to do the work.

Reason for existence: The primary purpose of the position or management's intent in establishing the position is a positive indicator to the appropriate series.

Organizational function: The mission or function of an organization can often provide an indication of the appropriate series for a position. Thus, for example, the GS-2210 series may be the most appropriate series for a position located in an IRM organization and system and database administration work. On the other hand, a similar position located in a Field Office should probably be classified in a different series.

Line of promotion: The normal line of promotion for the position and/or similar positions in the organization frequently will indicate the occupational specialization toward which the position is oriented.

Recruitment source: Supervisors and managers can help by identifying the occupational areas that provide the best qualified applicants to do the work.

Remember that the "paramount requirement" of a position refers to the essential, prerequisite knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the primary duty or responsibility for which the position has been established.

Information Technology Management Series, GS-2210

Place in this series those positions which have as the paramount knowledge requirement **Data Management – (DATAMGT) or Systems Administration – (SYSADMIN)**. Data management is work that involves planning and coordinating the installation, testing, operation, troubleshooting, and maintenance of hardware and software systems. Systems Administration is work that involves the planning, development, implementation, and administration of systems for the acquisition, storage, and retrieval of data. Typically, positions of this type would be located within Information Management offices at the state level or above. While many people performing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) work have some data management or systems administration duties, typically the type of work performed does not meet the "paramount requirement" test described above. In many cases the data management or systems administration work being performed may be placed more appropriately into the Computer Assistant, GS-335 series.

Resource Speciality

Based upon paramount knowledge requirements, place the position into the appropriate series, such as GS-401, 454, 486, 1301, 1315, et cetera, that is, those positions where GIS is a tool to accomplish specific tasks related to the work being performed.

Cartography Series, GS-1370

Place into this series positions that require the application of professional knowledge and skills in mapping and related sciences, and relevant mathematics and statistics to plan, design, research, develop, construct, evaluate and modify mapping and charting systems, products, and technology.

Cartographic Technician Series, GS-1371

Place into this series positions which require primarily a practical knowledge of the processes, practices, methods, and techniques involved in the construction of new or revision of existing maps, charts, and related cartographic products. Cartographic technicians supervise or perform precompilation tasks (such as the investigation of source materials, extension of basic geodetic control network, and the plotting map projection and ground control on base sheets), manual or photogrammetric compilation, assembling aerial photographs into mosaics, drafting, digitizing, and editing or reviewing. Work within this series does not require full professional knowledge in cartography or a related science. The types of products cartographic technicians are involved in are advancing the use of computers in mapping, new software development, GIS, remote sensing, and the Global Positioning System (GPS).

Miscellaneous Administration and Program Series, GS-301

Place into this series those positions which perform, supervise, or manage nonprofessional, two-grade interval work for which no other series is appropriate. The work requires analytical ability, judgment, discretion, and knowledge of a substantial body of administrative or program principles, concepts, policies, and objectives. OPM adjudicated an appeal on a BLM GIS position in 1998 sustaining the series as GS-301. The appeal can be found on the OPM website as C-0301-09-02.

**Supplemental Information and Guidance
Implementing the GS-2210 Information Technology Series**

Assistance (GS-335) versus Specialist (GS-2210) in Customer Support Work

The Office of Personnel Management issued on 7/17/01 a decision (C-0335-09-02) with significance to this subject. OPM sustained the title and series of a Computer Assistance, GS-335-09. The appellant functions as the primary administrator of an organization's LAN. The LAN was comprised of approximately 120 workstations, 20 printers, 4 network servers, 47 handheld wireless terminals, and a large number of ports and switches for connection to the installation WAN. At this writing, the OPM decision had not yet been posted on the OPM Classification Appeals website. For that reason, it is provided as an attachment to this IM.

References:

Page 14 of the GS-2200 JFS is a discussion on the types of work Customer Support (CUSTSPT) IT Specialists perform.

Page 21 of the GS-2200 JFS is the exclusions clause for GS-335 series work.

Page 19 of the GS-2200 JFS is a discussion on distinguishing between specialist and assistant work. This page contains the following discussion.

For example, positions responsible for functions such as those listed below should be excluded from the GS-2210 series because these functions do not require the regular and recurring application of knowledge of IT principles, concepts, and methods:

- monitoring the operation of small networked systems;
- adding network users;
- updating passwords;
- installing or assisting users in installing COTS software programs (e.g., database or spreadsheet programs);
- configuring hardware and software according to instructions;
- running scheduled backups;
- troubleshooting minor problems; and
- responding to less complex user questions.

Supplemental Information and Guidance Implementing the GS-2210 Information Technology Series

Telecommunication Positions

The exclusions section of the GS-2200 JFS is clear on telecommunication positions. The exclusion states that the following type work is appropriately placed into the Telecommunications, GS-0391, series.

Work involves acquisition, technical acceptance, installation, testing, modification, or replacement of telecommunications equipment, services, and systems. Work requires paramount knowledge of:

- the operational and performance characteristics of telecommunications equipment;
- the relationships among component parts of telecommunications systems; and
- telecommunications equipment interoperability and compatibility characteristics; as well as an understanding of basic electronics theories and operating principles. Work in this series also typically requires knowledge of IT concepts that is secondary to the paramount knowledge requirements described above.

This concept is reiterated in the Interpretive Guidance for the Information Technology Management document issued in June 2001 by OPM.

Some positions may contain work from both the Telecommunications Series, GS-391 and the Information Technology Series, GS-2210. Positions of this type are most likely to be found in smaller organizations where the amount of work present does not support both a Telecommunications and an Information Technology specialist. Situations may exist where a current Telecommunications Specialist is responsible for maintaining equipment that transports more than voice signals. The combination will likely involve networks and the type of work described within the Information Technology Management Series, GS-2210, parenthetically titled, Network.

In such situations, the amount and type of work being performed and organizational structure must be carefully outlined and evaluated. As previously discussed in the guidance for the placement of GIS positions, paramount knowledge required, reason for existence, organizational function, line of promotion, and recruitment source must be carefully considered in determining the appropriate series.

Telecommunications has increasingly become intertwined with digital networks that form the backbone for transporting all types of signals for many different purposes. The utilization of digital networks as the method of transporting voice signals does not determine series. The purpose of the work, not the equipment or method of transport, is to be utilized in determining series.